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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003416

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CH](#)  
SUBJECT: PRC DEMARCHE ON AMBASSADOR'S LIU XIAOBO LETTER,  
RIGHTS LAWYERS

REF: BEIJING 3321

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Eric Barboriak.  
Reasons: 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) On December 21, MFA Americas Department Deputy Director General Ding Xiaowen summoned Acting PolMinCouns to receive a formal response to a December 10 letter from Ambassador Huntsman to Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi raising USG concerns about the detention of Charter 08 drafter Liu Xiaobo and other human rights issues.

¶2. (C) Noting that he would attempt to refrain from "becoming emotional," Deputy Director General Ding Xiaowen told Acting PolMinCouns that China was strongly dissatisfied and registered its firm opposition to Ambassador Huntsman's letter and to his December 9 meeting with human rights lawyers (reftel). DDG Ding asserted that, during his meeting with Jiang Tianyong and four other rights lawyers, Ambassador Huntsman had said he would make representations to China to safeguard the freedom of religion and legal rights of Chinese citizens. In addition, the Ambassador had made inappropriate comments in his letter to FM Yang on the handling of specific human rights cases including those of Liu Xiaobo and Huang Qi. China was firmly opposed to these actions, DDG Ding said.

¶3. (C) DDG Ding said that in recent years China had made "huge progress on human rights" and that all its citizens were equal before the law. In that context, if persons violated the law they should be brought to justice, no matter who they were or what the situation. Certain "so-called" human rights lawyers and dissidents had sought to advance their "selfish interests" by attacking the Chinese government. It was inappropriate and unacceptable for the Ambassador to meet with these types of people, Ding said.

¶4. (C) China was a country "ruled by law" and the cases in question would be handled according to law, DDG Ding continued. The United States had no right to "point fingers" at China and interfere in its internal affairs. The bilateral human rights dialogue would take place in February and would serve to deepen mutual understanding and reduce differences between the United States and China on the basis of equality, mutual trust and noninterference in internal affairs, DDG said. In order to avoid harm to bilateral relations, China called on the United States to respect China's judicial sovereignty and to cease using human rights as an excuse to "meddle" in China's internal affairs.

¶5. (C) Acting PolMinCouns noted that the Ambassador's letter reflected the degree of USG concern over the cases of Liu Xiaobo, Huang Qi and others. He further noted that, as the Secretary had made clear in her December 14 speech, human rights remained a key component of U.S. foreign policy. Human rights had also been addressed in the joint statement by President Obama and President Hu with both sides acknowledging internationally recognized rights. The cases

of Liu Xiaobo and Huang Qi were clear violations of those internationally recognized norms. While the U.S. was willing to address these issues quietly through diplomatic channels, little progress had been achieved and China had not acknowledged U.S. concerns. A/PolMinCouns affirmed that the Ambassador would continue to meet freely with a range of Chinese citizens.

¶6. (C) In a lengthy and disjointed digression, DDG Ding noted that he had formerly been Ambassador to Botswana and recounted his conversations with the Botswana Foreign Minister who told him that the most fundamental human rights were the right to food and shelter. While it was true that there are fundamental rights of religion, speech and assembly, Ding said, "we must not forget the right of human dignity and the pursuit of happiness." In this area it was "a basic fact" that the PRC had made huge progress in the basic welfare of the Chinese people. DDG Ding suggested that the United States had not come to China's aid in this respect when it had declined to provide spare parts for Blackhawk helicopters to assist with relief efforts in the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake. Repeating that human rights cases could be "emotional," DDG Ding said the U.S. should seek to understand China's position through dialogue.

¶7. (C) A/PolMinCouns replied that the United States agreed that dialogue was important and would continue to address human rights issue through bilateral consultations. However, U.S. concerns over abuses of internally recognized human rights norms remained. A/PolMinCouns also pointed out that during relief efforts after the Sichuan earthquake, the United States, in addition to the other relief assistance it

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had provided, had offered to arrange airlift support for China, an offer which China had rejected.  
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